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ARMED FORCES

ACTIVITIES OF RUSSIAN SOLDIER IN AFGHANISTAN DETAILED

Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 24 Aug 83 p 4

[Article by Captain N. Burbyga: "Canopies in the Sky"]

[Text] "First, second, third..."

Captain Dadmir stopped counting. He stood, threw back his head, shaded his eyes with his hand, and looked as in the sky, faded white from the heat, the parachutes popped open like fountains. He was happy. And a familiar feeling called, pulled him there where, overcoming gravity, the parachutists hung for an instant between earth and sky. You look and it seems that you are omnipotent. But the instant is short-lived. The earth does not want to part with you. Because you are its son.

As if it has guessed his thoughts, a parachute rustled. The jump was for landing accuracy and it hit the center of the circle. The face of the Soviet officer leading the exercises seemed familiar to Dadmir. Where had he seen him?

Resilient legs struck the ground and rolled over. Another parachutist is ready for combat.

Bravo! Dadmir could not contain himself, admiring and a bit envious of both the professionalism of the officer and the readiness of his subordinates. He thought that this was how it was necessary to learn; so that in any situation he could control the flight. Then everything would not be like it was in the last raid.

Mountains. The helicopters circle, clinging to the summits. The parachutists jumped. Wind. Muzzle flashes. He landed. He saw Akhtar Mukhamed carried to a clay building by the wind. The green turbaned ones immediately crawled toward him. A burst of fire chased them back behind the black boulders and they bent down and crossed over on the run. It could have been worse. As the "commando" battalion deputy commander for the parachutists he knew that in the mountains it is necessary to jump with extreme precision.

Dadmir continued to study the airborne officer and suddenly recalled from where he knew him. Several months before he, Dadmir, had come to this sub-unit. The duty man met him and explained that everyone was at the shooting

range where a competition was underway. An Afghan officer had also decided to test himself. This same major was firing next to him. Both hit nine of nine targets. The second time on the board where the results were posted again it said Yuriy Rendel' and Dadmir: nine of nine. And the third time, nine of nine. Someone started to laugh: we will count--friendship was the winner.

Several days passed. Major Yuri Rendel' prepared to depart to leave. Home to the Baltic. He had not been there for a long time. And it is true, what could be better than his home town of Rezekne, with its cozy old cottages and short, cobblestone paved by-streets. And there one could go off to a farm. Quiet. And the nights. Such summer nights there--be quiet and listen!

Then he recalled taking his Yul'ka to first grade. He took from his locker a photograph of his daughter recently sent from home. She had grown. Of course she had grown; she's going to school. Her wide open eyes gazed at him trustingly and two pigtailed stuck out on either side. A fidget! Round faced like himself. Suddenly the door to the room opened.

"Comrade Major, the commander wants you", a solider said.

Soon Rendel' returned. His face was stern, concentrated, calm. They always knew him like this. Although no one knew anything about the reason he had been summoned, everyone guessed immediately--there would be no leave.

"A sports parachute group had been created in the 'commando' brigade," Rendel' explained. "The Afghan comrades had asked for help in setting up the work of the section and organizing training. In time they want to participate in competition with parachutists of fraternal armies in championships and olympic games. How could we refuse? I put leave off until September; 'velvet season' as they say."

But just the same, Yul'ka stayed on his mind--in her school uniform, with flowers. A beloved girl. And he had so wanted a son, to be like him and also become a military man. He remembered how he himself had longed to join. But at the military commissariat they advised him, as usual, to first grow up. And his mother believed that he was still too young to think about it. In general she hoped that her son would lose interest and change his mind. But he never lost interest. He became a student at the Suvorov Military School. He spent his spare time in the glider section. For its romance and precision, its risk and courage, and for its beauty he fell in love with the sport.

However, Rendel' never became a pilot. He injured the bridge of his nose in the ring. And while boxing was not desireable for a pilot, it was no hindrance for a parachutist. He became a student at Ryazan Higher Airborne Command School imeni Leninist Komsomol. Yuri remembered that first jump all his life.

He did not want to sleep. Major Rendel' lay with his hands behind his head. Night was a continuation of day. Armored personnel carriers rumbled outside his window. Soldiers hurried past, exchanging words as they marched. Automatic weapons clinked. Vehicles departed. Some soldiers would again have a sleepless night. There were still many enemies in the republic. He recalled the day's talk with the sarbar, the Afghan soldier who had shared his pain: bandits were endangering his parents. They demanded that their son desert. His father had come recently, but said nothing to him, not wishing to trouble him. The soldier learned about everything from others. Now he worried about his relatives.

Dadmir came in in the morning and told about the night operation. The "dushmany" tried to disrupt the opening of the 1st DOMA (Democratic Organization of Afghanistan Youth) Congress and frighten the delegates. But they were repulsed.

A bus rolled through the morning city. The sun had not yet come up from behind the mountains, but it could be seen everywhere that the weather would be excellent. Major Yu. Rendel' sat forward and looked out the window. It was a familiar scene: clay houses huddled together on the hillsides, and two-story cottages and administrative buildings. His tour was coming to an end. Behind were constant training and individual exercises. In the opinion of specialists the section was well prepared. Rendel' painstakingly practiced landing techniques with the Afghan soldiers. He taught them to control the parachute--to move horizontally and jump for an accurate landing. And just the same, nervousness did not leave the Soviet officer. Today is a sports holiday. The parachutists are greeting the delegates to the 1st DOMA Congress. These are not simple jumps. They would have to show all their ability.

In the bus Dadmir sat next to Rendel'. Sportswomen were sitting opposite them. They listened to the Afghan officer joke the whole way and laughed heartily. One, with a barely noticeable birthmark on her cheek, had been in the section from the first day. When they were introduced, Dadmir called the girl Khan Masha as a joke. She retained the name from him for good luck. The girl turned out to be strong willed. They recounted that from childhood she was not accustomed to concede anything to the boys. Just like they she climbed trees and practiced throwing rocks and shooting. During training in Afghanistan she landed one day near a village. While she was freeing herself from her parachute a crowd surrounded her. When they figured out that she was a girl, swearing and threats rained down on her. The people were not accustomed to such a thing. That which is new is not accepted right away. She particularly recalled a raw-boned man. He furiously called for violence. When they came right up to her she tore her knife from her belt. The noise stopped and the crowd drew back. They understood that this one would not be frightened.

At the airfield the helicopter was already waiting for the participants in the holiday. Rendel' did not fly. He observed from the ground as the bright canopies adorned the sky. He rejoiced. The Afghan soldiers excellently handled their difficult task and precisely accomplished the most complex aerial acrobatics. Many landed in the very center of the circle. Thus the efforts, the hours and days of intense preparation, and all the many training exercises were not in vain.

And a few hours later he was already back in his unit, reading a letter from his wife Lena.

Soon Major Rendel' departed for home. On the eve of his departure he, along with his comrades, sang a song--one of those which came into being here in fraternal Afghanistan.

It went: "We must travel much along Afghan roads."

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ARMED FORCES

MOSCOW PAPER DISCUSSES MOOD OF TROOPS IN DRA

PM011640 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 29 Sep 83 First Edition p 3

[Report by A. Khorobrykh under the rubric "From the Afghan Notework": "On the Road to Kabul"]

[Text] Kabul, Moscow--Our special correspondent A. Khorobrykh has recently returned from the limited contingent of Soviet troops in the DRA. Today we are publishing his first report.

The tankmen had not had time to take up their posts when a powerful explosion rang out on the highway. An Afghan truck which was heading for Kabul loaded with civilian goods jounced awkwardly and, having lost its front wheel, rolled over onto its side. Captain V. Stuliy jumped out onto the roadway. Moans were coming from the truck cab.

The consequences of the explosion turned out to be horrific. A completely innocent 10-year-old boy died in a Soviet tankman's arms without regaining consciousness. The driver, with serious injuries to both his legs, was cursing the dushmans, his face contorted with pain. A venerable old man in a violet turban and a long robe was fingering amber beads with a blank look in his eyes....

When our vehicles came on the scene of the catastrophe some 10 minutes later, the casualties had already been evacuated and traffic on the highway was restored.

"Captain Stuliy can turn his hand to anything," political worker N. Yezhov told us before we set out on the trip. "He can organize uninterrupted traffic on the highway, defuse a mine, and he is very good with weapons. The company which he commands has an 'excellent' rating for the second year running. Complete interchangeability has been achieved in all the crews."

Company Commander Capt. V. Stuliy, showed us round his "patch" not without pride--the Lenin Room, the sleeping quarters, the spick-and-span canteen.... By the side of the building stood a scorched tank.

"An Italian-made mine exploded under this machine while it was escorting a motorized column," Valentin Petrovich explained. "None of the crew members was hurt, although the tank caught it, as you can see. But we have restored it with our own hands."

It is only going on for 10 o'clock, and already it is 37 degrees centigrade in the shade. The company commander invites us to his "quarters" for a drink of camel thorn tea--the best thing there is for quenching thirst. Next to the earthenware

jug I notice a ribbed dark yellow "saucepan." At first I would not have guessed that that was a defused mine exactly like the one which blew up under the truck. But that is precisely what it was.

"We discovered it yesterday on the side of the road," the captain said when he saw me looking at it. "The dushmans set it up during the night..."

Suddenly my interlocutor's face lit up with mischief:

"Our artists have made the covers of these infernal devices into table lamp shades and improvised standard lamps."

Nikolay Nikolayevich Yezhov and I had to smile. However, I did not feel like smiling when, a few days later, in an inaccessible mountain area of Kabul Province--the Khak-e Jabbar District--I saw some of the weapons captured from the dushmans.

Made in United States, Italy, Egypt--read the brands on the recoilless guns, mortars, and heavy machineguns, and the ammunition that went with them. The dushmans were also equipped with antiaircraft missiles made in Egypt and Italian antitank and antipersonnel mines.

We are on the road again. The commander of the front armored vehicle is Major I. Likhoshva, one of the regiment's best political workers. About himself Leonid Illarionovich said briefly and simply:

"My grandfather was a tailor. They called him Likhaya Shva (valiant stitcher). That is the origin of my surname. The military dynasty was started by my father. He served for nearly 30 years in the army. My brother Vyacheslav is serving in the air defence forces, my sister Lida is married to a fighter pilot. And I am here..."

The vehicles left the highway and followed a dusty country road. Somewhere to the side an exchange of fire starts up.

"It looks as though another gang has appeared in the kisklak," political officer N. Yezhov says. "The self-defence forces and the tsarandoy--the people's militia--will prevent it from gaining a foothold."

Involuntarily I glance at the red flag flying above the post building, at the TV aerial on which swallows have settled comfortably. The sun is baking, the grapes are ripening, there is silence all around, and suddenly--an exchange of fire. It is hard to make any sense of it.

Indeed, the Soviet servicemen's service in Afghanistan is not easy. Especially when it is a matter of guarding important installations together with Afghan servicemen. The problem is that for most of the time personnel are separated from their subunit and unit as a whole. The whole responsibility falls on junior officers, ensigns, and sergeants. And it must be said that they discharge their international duty with honor.

Senior Lieutenant A. Radimov is one of them--a Komsomol member, a hereditary tankman, and commander of a distinguished platoon. He is a man of few words, who does not show his feelings and judges his subordinates [word indistinct]. As if expressing gratitude for his service, Major Likhoshva hands A. Rodimov an envelope with a view of the Kuybyshev embankment.

"From my father!"--the lieutenant's face lit up. "This is the best present I could get."

As I looked at the lieutenant's youthful face I remembered another letter which had been addressed to the regiment's commander.

"...Our son Salavat Vilich Mamayev is serving his second year in your unit, in Afghanistan--that country which is so remote for us Siberians. We are proud that this difficult but high honor has been bestowed on our son. We hope that our sons will discharge their high international duty with honor, and we hope for an early joyful reunion on our own soil.

"With parental greetings,

"Vil Gizzatovich and Fagilya Salinovna Mamayev.

"Chechkino village, Yarkovskiy Rayon, Tyumin Oblast."

They are waiting for them, for our servicemen, at home. But the time has not yet come for them to return to hearth and home. The forces of international imperialism and reaction are continuing to give intensive military aid to the Afghan counterrevolution. Evidence of this is provided by not only weapons but also documents seized from the dushmans in the Khak-e Jabbar District at the same time. These include instructions on how to organize acts of subversion and directions for using grenade launchers and mines....

The situation in the country continues to stabilize. However, in their efforts to reverse the development of events in the DRA, foreign patrons are spending lavishly to arm the dushmans. And the Soviet servicemen see and know this. Their view was put across eloquently by guards private Aleksandr Lyamar answering Michael David, a correspondent of the U.S. DAILY WORLD newspaper.

Correspondent: The Western press writes that you do not want to leave Afghanistan. Is that true?

Guards Pvt A. Lyamar: The stance of our government and our party on this account is precise and clear. As for myself personally, I can say the following: We have no intention of building our own long-term bases here as the Americans do in other countries. We live in tents and temporary living premises. We will leave Afghanistan as soon as the Afghan Government deems it necessary. But we will not leave as the Americans did in Vietnam. We will leave this country as good neighbors and loyal friends. [Lyamar ends]

I was able to spend only one day among the tankmen doing their difficult service on Afghan soil. How many amazing destinies, different characters, and customs! But they are all united by their love for the motherland, loyalty to their international duty, and readiness to accomplish great feats for the sake of world peace.

ARMED FORCES

SOVIET MILITARY DOCTORS HELP AFGHAN PEASANTS

LD191809 Moscow Domestic Television Service in Russian 1400 GMT 19 Oct 83

[From the Vremya newscast]

[Text] Soviet medics in Afghanistan--our correspondent reports [report by D. Khavin--identified by onscreen caption]:

Peasants of (Gazan) village in Baghlan Province needed qualified medical aid, but there is no doctor for many tens of kilometers around. Soviet military doctors came to the aid of the peasants [video shows Soviet military medics examining patients] At first the local residents were wary of coming to see the doctors. A counterrevolutionary gang is operating in the area, intimidating the peasants and spreading all kinds of fancy stories about Soviet people. But now the very first patients have seen what the attention of Soviet doctors is worth, and people have gradually started lining up for them. Before the April revolution, there were only 901 doctors in the whole of Afghanistan, that is, one for every 20,000 people. In recent years, the people's authorities have done much to develop medical services. But, for the time being, the lack of qualified cadres is keenly felt. It is often difficult to give the residents of distant villages help because of the activities of counterrevolutionary gangs. That is why Soviet military doctors have taken upon themselves the difficult duty of helping the Afghan people, sometimes in the most difficult conditions.

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ARMED FORCES:

MOSCOW TV ON DRA 'SUCCESSFUL OPERATION' AGAINST BANDITS

LD141748 Moscow Domestic Television Service in Russian 1400 GMT 14 Oct 83

[From the Vremya newscast; video report by D. Khavin]

[Text] Afghanistan's Armed Forces are waging a successful struggle against the enemies of the April Revolution who are penetrating into the republic's territory. Several large bands have been eliminated in Deh Sabz region, Kabul Province.

[Video of aerial views of region, cutting to shots of machineguns, mines and ammunition in caves]. The counterrevolutionary bosses who are dug in in Pakistan had given them special tasks. Groups were formed here which were sent into Kabul and its environs to carry out sabotage and terrorist acts. Caragans came here secretly with arms. Whole arsenals were found in mountain caves. During the operation, 50 large-calibre machineguns, a mountain antiaircraft installation, several hundred firearms, over 2.5 million mines made in the United States and other NATO countries were seized.

On the occasion of the successful conclusion of the operation a meeting of the local population took place in the kishlak of Shakh (Nikola), in which Soltan Ali Keshtmand, chairman of the DRA Council of Ministers, and Defense Minister Abdal Qader took part. [Shots of meeting, Keshtmand making speech, and Qader] Speaking at the meeting, Comrade Keshtmand stated that the people's power appeals to everyone who has been drawn into the fraternal war by force or deception voluntarily to lay down their arms and to return to peaceful labor. But those who consciously hinder the Afghan people in their construction of a peaceful life by spilling the blood of completely innocent people, let them not hope for mercy.

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